Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

dividing ~~a set of~~ target devices to which a message is targeted into subsets of target devices, wherein a subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device and **[[**the**]]** a number of subsets **[[**of**]]** to which the target devices are divided; and

varying a timing with which the message is communicated to the respective subsets of target devices.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

broadcasting the message over a network;

receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimating a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

multicasting the message to a subset of a network;

receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimating a number of devices in the subnet; and

determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

4. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-accessible medium to provide machine-readable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic system to:

divide ~~a set of~~ target devices to which a message is targeted into subsets of target devices, wherein a subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device and **[[**the**]]** a number of subsets **[[**of**]]** to which the target devices are divided; and

vary a timing with which the message is communicated to the respective subsets of target devices.

5. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 4 wherein the instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

6. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 4 wherein the instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

7. (Currently Amended) An electronic data signal embodied in a data communications medium shared among a plurality of network devices comprising sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic systems to:

divide ~~a set of~~ target devices to which a message is targeted into subsets of target devices, wherein a subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an

identifier of the device and [[the]] a number of subsets [[of]] to which the target devices are divided; and

vary a timing with which the message is communicated to the respective subsets of target devices.

8. (Previously Presented) The electronic data signal of claim 7 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

9. (Previously Presented) The electronic data signal of claim 7 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

10. (Original) A method comprising:

dividing a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

varying a timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 wherein determining the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

broadcasting the message over a network;

receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimating a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 wherein determining the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

multicasting the message to a subset of a network;

receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimating a number of devices in the subnet; and

determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

13. (Previously Presented) An article comprising a machine-accessible medium to provide machine-readable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic system to:

divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

vary a timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

14. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 13 wherein the instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

15. (Previously Presented) The article of claim 13 wherein the instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

16. (Previously Presented) An electronic data signal embodied in a data communications medium shared among a plurality of network devices comprising sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic systems to:

divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

vary a timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

17. (Previously Presented) The electronic data signal of claim 16 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

18. (Previously Presented) The electronic data signal of claim 16 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet..

19-24. (Withdrawn)